

Feb. 16, 1999

Kathleen Naymola
C.P.D. Director
Dept of Housing & Urban Development
1 Newark Center 13th Floor
Newark, N.J. 07102

Dear Kathleen Naymola,

I am writing to delineate what has been an almost six year problem with my current residence I purchased a new low income home from the city of Newark, in the Victory Gardens Development on Oct. 19th and since that time have only met with serious pervasive and incessant problems more akin to run down dilapidated structures. I spent innumerable, great amounts of time and money working to rectify this problem but to no avail. The municipal authorities I have contacted, negotiated with, and lobbied have been non-cooperative in my efforts to find a resolution to the persistent defects with my current residence.

My problems began on October 19th when I moved into my "new" home. Immediately there was substantial evidence that someone else had been residing at my home before me – most notably this individual continued to receive mail at my residence after I had moved in and left behind serious property damage. The following is a detailed listing of the problems with the residence, which persist until today caused by the previous resident and the substandard construction.

- The new carpet was stained and damaged prior to my moving in.
- The heating and air-conditioning units do not function properly, the heating vents do not produce adequate heat.
- The leaking roof fixed.
- The pipes under the kitchen and bathroom sinks leak.
- The deck is coming apart due to loose or missing nails.
- The nails on the stairway are protruding and not secured properly.
- The basement has holes that have led to vermin infestation.
- The floorboards downstairs and upstairs are installed improperly and squeak.
- Parts are missing from the bathtub.
- The kitchen and basement wiring is faulty: the lights intermittently grow light and dim and the bulbs blow at great frequency.

- There was no heat in the master bedroom until 1994.
- The kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans are warped.
- The basement floor is not level.
- The heating ducts under the kitchen are not properly connected.
- The lock on the fence was fixed.

What makes this especially egregious is that I was given verbal assurances by City authorities that my complaints would be addressed. After many months of assurances with no resulting action, I began working with State authorities to rectify my situation. The City's stalling tactics worked to their advantage because, to my dismay, by the time the

State authorities became actively involved, many of the housing defects were no longer covered by warranty, and the State authority could not vindicate many of my claims.

However during mediation the city made certain concessions and commitments (please see enclosed inspection report from May 29, 1996 – claim number CL-95-0573-2).

Unfortunately, even these commitments made to the Bureau of Homeowner Protection have been left unfulfilled. Specifically those commitments were:

- Commitment to upgrade the heating system within 30 days.
- Commitment to check the house wiring.
- Commitment to repaint the home.
- Commitment to properly attach heat duct under the kitchen.
- Commitment to re-weld lock on outside gate.
- Offer to replace water heater under the condition that I withdraw my complaint.

I now find myself greatly dismayed at my situation. I have had strong faith over the past years that I would eventually, if I were persistent, find justice. However I have only faced aggravation, emotional trials, and what I believe has been overt deception and patently obstructionist behavior on the part of the City. What is most tragic is that I am not the only person in this

new housing complex that is enduring these types of trials in their "new home".

It is clear to me that the Federal government gave the city of Newark money for the sole purpose of providing opportunities for home ownership to low income people. It was my understanding that one philosophy behind this initiative was that home ownership helps to develop pride amongst residents, it affords them an opportunity to build a base of capital, and provides an opportunity to escape the cycle of financial dependency and poor resources attendant to many public housing projects. None of these goals have been accomplished and I sadly find myself trapped in a situation as equally troubling and disabling as a person living in a deficient rental unit.

I hope that you can find some way to aid me and the other home owners in my development. I believe that we deserve to have our shattered dreams restored. I would greatly appreciate it if you could contact me soon regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Bernice Wallace
540 Bergen Street
Newark, N.J. 07108